

ORNITHOLOGICAL LITERATURE

A GUIDE TO BIRD WATCHING. By Joseph J. Hickey, Illustrated by Francis Lee Jaques. Oxford University Press, New York, 1943: $5\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{3}{8}$ in., xiv + 262 pp. \$3.50.

The keynote of this exciting book is given in the first two sentences of the preface: "Bird watching embraces individual enterprise on the one hand, collective effort on the other. Above all else, it is marked by a ready exchange of experience, by a high regard for truth, and by a conviction that wild birds express the most spectacular development of nature."

For the first time we have a real guide to the study of the live bird in its environment, a guide written with freshness and humor, and teeming with problems. The first paragraphs of Chapter One, "How to Begin Bird Study," are masterpieces in depicting the sheer delight of bird study—its drama, the reward of discovery. "Each species offers a new glimpse of creation, each carries its own reward." And no one should miss the fun in the section on bird names, or the excellent trick for avoiding confusion by "privately calling" one water-thrush the "white Louisiana," the other the "yellow northern."

The five chief chapters are entitled: The Lure of Migration Watching; Adventures in Bird Counting; Explorations in Bird Distribution; The Romance of Bird Banding; and The Art of Bird Watching. Each subject is treated adequately from the standpoint of the field student; a sound theoretical basis is laid, and opportunities are pointed out for both individual and cooperative study. In Chapter Two the author's examination of the recoveries of 61 fledgling Robins in subsequent breeding season shows a definite tendency towards return to the vicinity of the birth place. In Chapter Three the disposition to under-estimate the number of small birds in a flock and to over-estimate the number of large birds is mentioned. Thrilling tales are given of counts of bird roosts of many species and of migrating hawks. Changes in local bird life are discussed here while changes over the continent, due to the white man, are given in a striking table (p. 177).

One of the author's special fields of interest is that of "ecological distribution." Here there are a number of original tables: 19, "Some foraging areas of birds in the nesting season," based on over 100 pairs of 14 species; 20, showing the lowest singing perches accepted by 17 species, suggesting the intriguing problem of specific height of such perches; and 18, a comparison of Nutcracker invasions in Europe and Crossbill in Massachusetts, showing a year for year correspondence, although due on the one hand to failure of cedar nuts in Siberia, and on the other to pinecone seeds in North America. Various factors in habitat selection are discussed, and an excellent treatment of the subject of succession given.

The "inauguration of systematic bird banding about 1920" was an even greater revolution in bird study than "the substitution of field glasses for the collector's gun, around 1900." Bird banding can be divided into three stages: the ringing of fledglings, the trapping of adults, and color banding. A survey of the results of the different methods is given, and excellent suggestions offered for making the most of the unique opportunity of banding, both by individuals and by cooperative effort. The author's organization of color banding of young Herring Gulls according to year and birth place is a fine example of collective action.

In the last chapter the author tells us: "The great mysteries of bird life still crowd our very doorsteps. We are still living in an age of wonder." The table on page 168—"Handbook Information Still Wanted on North American Birds"—is a vivid illustration of how little we yet know. The sections on "The student and his bird club," "Co-operative bird watching; research partnerships; organized inquiries" all emphasize the friendly contacts that are so characteristic of most students of birds. Excellent advice is given on publishing observations; "wordiness and insufficient data" are two of the commonest weaknesses, and a timely note

is added: "Above all, do not pad the bibliography." Finally in "Bird Watching and America" there is a straightforward statement of the responsibility of the bird watcher for the preservation of birds.

The 30 tables are well chosen and invitingly labeled "Some Examples and Results of Bird Watching." Five important appendices are included. The first is a unique contribution illustrated by sketches of models made by Charles A. Urner of shore bird tracks, as well as a detailed key to such tracks. A table summarizing the results of breeding bird censuses in North America arranged according to habitats is given in Appendix B. An exceedingly suggestive and detailed "Outline for a Life-History Study" constitutes one of the notable contributions of the book. Thirty-two pages are devoted to an annotated list of bird books in fourteen categories, and ten pages to a regional list of bird clubs in the United States and Canada; both of these sections will be of great value to the beginner in bird watching. A good index completes the volume. And in our enthusiasm over the text we must not forget Mr. Jaques' charming and spirited sketches.

Mr. Hickey has reached the goal he set himself: "It is the chief purpose of this book to show how bird watching can be made to last a lifetime, and to yield to the very end the same full measure of enjoyment."—Margaret M. Nice.

STUDIES IN THE LIFE HISTORY OF THE SONG SPARROW, II: THE BEHAVIOR OF THE SONG SPARROW AND OTHER PASSERINES. By Margaret Morse Nice. Trans. Linn. Soc. of New York, 6, Sept. 1943: viii + 329 pp., 1 pl. and 6 text figs. \$2.00 on direct order from The Linn. Soc. of New York, % Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist., Central Park West at 79th St., New York, 24, N. Y.

The second part of Mrs. Nice's "Studies in the Life History of the Song Sparrow" is a work of much wider interest and value than the first part, admirable as that one is. It is, as the author says in her foreword, "primarily a treatise on the behavior of passerine birds with the Song Sparrow as the chief example," and its initial chapter is a general discussion of bird behavior in which the approach to the particular species, *Melospiza melodia*, is outlined, and the main points of view adhered to in the analysis of the subsequent material are established. Mrs. Nice is convinced of the general accuracy and trustworthiness of Konrad Lorenz's theories and interpretations of avian activity, and arranges her data and presents her conclusions largely within the limits imposed by this conviction. If any general criticism may be made of her work it must be of the soundness of her judgment in so completely accepting Lorenz as a guide. Yet, who has so far appeared on the ornithological horizon to offer more suggestive and stimulating general concepts of bird behavior, or ones that help to clarify so many individual parts of the total picture? To the data Mrs. Nice presents on the Song Sparrow no one can take exception. No one else knows as much about the bird as she does. A large part of the material is new to ornithological literature and therefore cannot be critically compared with previous information, but there is no reason to doubt its validity. Seven years of intensive, meticulous and intelligent field and aviary studies have yielded a rich harvest of detailed, individualized, observational data both quantitatively and qualitatively incomparably in advance of what we have for any other bird species. Added to this we have in the present book a great number of interpretations and suggestive comments that are in themselves a digest of a vast and not always readily assimilable literature. In other words, Mrs. Nice's book presents more information than we have ever had about any single species, more thoroughly analyzed, and more completely integrated with current knowledge and modern concepts of animal behavior. To the serious student it will long be a basic work.

It is impossible in a short review to do more than list the main topics discussed. The book is so full of "meat" that the most that can be done here is to point out the wealth of material presented and to hope the interested readers of this notice will avail themselves of this new source of data and digest of ideas. The book is divided into 22 chapters and 5 appendices. The first chapter is a